



## PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

### HISTORIC DISTRICT

A historic district is defined as a significant concentration of buildings, structures, or sites that are united historically and aesthetically by plan or physical development. The Preliminary Information Form (PIF) constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of a historic district for eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The PIF is **not** the same as a nomination to the Registers, but is a means for evaluating the **eligibility** of a historic district for listing. The PIF is evaluated by Department of Historic Resources (DHR) staff and the State Review Board and their recommendations regarding the property's eligibility will be provided to the applicant in writing.

#### **Before Preparing a PIF**

Contact DHR's Archivist for assistance in obtaining any information DHR may have on file about your property, such as a previous architectural survey record or eligibility evaluation. You are welcome to use this information in preparing your PIF. Contact DHR's Archivist by phone at (804) 482-6102, or by email at [Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov).

Staff at one of DHR's three Regional offices are available to answer questions you may have as you begin preparing your PIF. Locations and contact information for each office is at [http://dhr.virginia.gov/regional\\_offices/regional\\_offices.htm](http://dhr.virginia.gov/regional_offices/regional_offices.htm). (You also are welcome to ask DHR's Archivist for the contact information.)

#### **Preparing a PIF**

A PIF consists of three equally important parts:

1. **Form:** Complete the attached form to the best of your ability, using your own research about the proposed historic district as well as any information that DHR has provided. Remember that DHR's Regional staff also are available to assist you. The form may be completed using Microsoft Word software, typed, or hand-written. If using MS Word, the PIF can be submitted via CD, email, ftp, or other file sharing means.

#### **Your PIF will not be evaluated if it is missing any of the following information:**

- Applicant/Sponsor's signature
- Contact information for the person submitting the form (if different from the applicant/sponsor)
- Contact information for the City Manager or County Administrator where the property is located
- 2. **Photos:** Provide color photographs of the proposed historic district's general streetscape and a sample of individual buildings, sites, and/or structures that are representative of the district's character. Submit photo prints on 4" x 6" glossy photo paper and digital images on CD or other file sharing means approved by DHR's Regional staff.
- 3. **Maps:** A minimum of two maps must accompany your PIF:
  - **Location map:** This map shows the exact location of the proposed historic district. The map can be created using Google Maps, Google Earth, Bing, or other mapping websites. A copy of a road map also may be used as long as the district's exact location and proposed boundaries are shown on the map. DHR's Archivist can assist in providing an acceptable location map with boundaries.
  - **Sketch map:** This map shows the proposed boundaries and locations of all resources within the proposed historic district as well as major landscape features such as a stream, formal gardens, roads, and parking areas. The sketch map can be drawn by hand; or an annotated aerial view, tax parcel map or survey map may be used. For large historic districts, the local government may be able to provide a base map that includes roads, tax parcel boundaries, and other information. Contact staff at the local government's planning and permitting office for assistance.

**Note:** All submitted materials become the property of DHR and will be retained in our permanent Archive. In addition, the materials will be posted on DHR's public website for a period of time during the evaluation process.

*Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form. Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.*



## PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for HISTORIC DISTRICTS

### Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No **X**

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No **X**

### 1. General Information

District name(s): Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic District

Main Streets and/or Routes: Ashcake Road, Egypt Road, Johnson-Town Road, Sliding Hill Road, Lewistown Road, Brook Spring Road and Mount Hermon Road.

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: County of Hanover, Virginia

### 2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: About 1000 Acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban **X** Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ Rural **X**

Briefly describe the district's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

### 3. Architectural/Physical Description

Architectural Style(s): \_\_\_\_\_

If any individual properties within the district were designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

If any builders or developers are known, please list here: Most of the older buildings in the District were built by ancestors of the current residents.

Date(s) of construction (can be approximate): c. 1730s-1970 (and later)

Are there any known threats to this district? Commercial and Industrial Development

### Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire historic district, such as building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district, as well as typical updates, additions, remodelings, or other alterations that characterize the district.

## Summary

The Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic District is a largely rural area of about 1000 acres. It is located to the southeast of the Town of Ashland. The District is an elongated shape running from northwest to southeast, roughly following Ashcake Road. The community is largely flat except where it dips into an area of ravines, referred to as the Slashes. There are large swampy areas in and around the Totopotomoy Creek, which runs along the southeastern edge of the boundary. The District follows Ashcake Road, an eighteenth century east-west transportation route that forms the spine of the District. African American families settled on Ashcake Road and on roads that extend to the south into what was at one time woods and farm land. Lewistown Road was named after the Lewis family; and Johnson-Town Road after the Johnson family. Morris Road, or Morris-Town Road, was named after the Morris family, later becoming Egypt Road. Caroline Dobson Morris was enslaved by the Perrin family whose land holdings were in the eastern end of the district. There are about 120 buildings within the boundaries. Most are small- to medium-sized dwellings and more than half date to the Period of Significance (1729-1971). There are two historic churches; Slash Church, a Colonial era building, is listed on the state and national registers, and Brown Grove Baptist Church, with roots in the Reconstruction Era, was recently recommended individually eligible. There are two individually eligible archaeological sites: the site of the 1927 Brown Grove School and a domestic site representing 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling at the Merry Oaks Tavern parcel. There is potential for numerous other sites based on map study/projection and descendant family memories, and based on the lack of disturbance in many former house site areas. There are at least 7-10 known family cemeteries spread over the District area. These cemeteries are located near family home places. The non-contributing buildings are mostly dwellings that are similar in size and scale to the historic dwellings. The proposed boundary does not include encroachments into the district, which include a County landfill, a concrete plant, a modern cul-de-sac, and Hanover Airport.

## Early Historic Resources (1729-1865)

Before the establishment of the Reconstruction Era community, the families of many of the current residents worked and lived on local farms and practiced religion as they were allowed to under the restrictions of the system of enslavement. Enslaved, and possibly free, African Americans likely participated in the construction of Slash Church in the early eighteenth century (c. 1729). African Americans were likely allowed to worship from a small gallery or the rear pews in the church at some periods during the Church's history. Community members describe some worship taking place in a brush arbor structure somewhere near Sliding Hill Road before the first Brown Grove Church was built. Slash Church, already individually listed is included as a contributing property in the District (VDHR #042-0033-VLR/NRHP 1972). It is the oldest architectural resource in the proposed district. Candlewick/Ford Farm (VDHR #042-0253) is a large tract that is still working farm in the area. The intact farmhouse dates to the 1840s. The house is a traditional two-story, center-hall heavy frame dwelling with exterior end chimneys.

In 1893, Edmund (or Edwin) and Martha Brown, residents of Brown Grove community, purchased 1.95 acres of land from Orson and Frances Staley. The land was donated to the Brown Grove Baptist Church congregation by the Brown family with the stipulation that it was for church use only. The deed was accomplished through the descendant of their daughter, Elizabeth (Brown). The first Brown Grove Baptist Church was a wooden church built sometime after 1893. The cemetery next to the present day church includes Brown family members. The cemetery may predate the church and relate to the Brown family's use of the property before 1893. There are no images of the Church before 1945, but a frame building was on the site by the 1920s. The current Church is a brick Gothic Revival Style building, built in 1945.

In the southeastern area of the proposed district, archaeologists have confirmed site VDHR# 44HN0326, likely the Robert Smith House, believed to have been the residence of the owner or manager of the Merry Oaks Tavern. The site is described in recent and past archaeology work as an 18th or early 19th century domestic assemblage representing a dwelling. The Frank Garnett family whose land holdings included the

site were an African American family and local residents believe the Garnetts either lived at one of the buildings or leased the building(s) to another African American resident sometime after gaining ownership of the property in 1919. That same parcel may or may not include the archaeological remains of the Merry Oaks Tavern. That tract of land has long been associated with the historic events that took place at the Tavern.

The Ashcake Road corridor is also within the avenue of approach for the Hanover Court House Battlefield (VDHR# 042-0086). A battle took place at the railroad crossing at Peaks, about a mile east of the eastern District boundary. Ashcake Road was a main artery for troop movements, and soldiers wounded at the battle were sheltered in an on the grounds of Slash Church. The current owners of the Ford/Candlewick Farm also believe that house was used for a camp and for wounded soldiers.

All of these resources relate to the African American history of Brown Grove, as residents have associations with these sites whether dating to antebellum period later Reconstruction Era and later.

## **Brown Grove Community Resources C. 1865-1971**

### **Residential/Dwellings**

The Brown Grove Residential Community Rural Historic District includes about 120 primary buildings (more outbuildings may increase this number). Of this number, about 60-70 dwellings are contributing and within the period of significance (1729 to 1971). Photos provided by the residents, taken in the 1940s/50s, show a large number of frame vernacular houses on large open areas of land. Some are vernacular nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that replaced earlier buildings. The first generation of buildings were likely heavy frame and log dwellings. One of the log buildings survived into the 1950s as noted by local residents; Mary and Linwood Lewis lived in a log building next to their grocery store on Ashcake Road. As economic conditions improved in the twentieth century many owners built new houses. Like many places in rural Virginia, the newer houses often introduced modern plumbing, electrical and heating technology. There are several frame cottages that date to the 1930s and a greater number that represent vernacular architecture of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. In some cases, older houses were demolished and the new house was built on the same site. In many cases, older houses were abandoned and eventually disappeared. It is very likely that there are residential sites of earlier dwellings throughout the district based on the reporting of residents. A good example of this evolution is at the end of Egypt Road where the Coleman family lived in a two-story frame house. The Melvina and Ollie Coleman, Sr. family with as many as eleven children lived in a two-story frame house built in the early twentieth century. They built an improved house of cinder block in a Minimal Traditional style across the street. Work on the new house took 7 years stretching from the late 1950s into the 1960s. Many houses, if not most of the historic houses in the community, were built by local African American builders.

The range of historic buildings styles include Bungalows, Cape Cod Colonial, Ranch, Split-level styles and forms and several types of hybrid or vernacular genres. There is a pattern of using concrete block in many of the houses from the 1940s-1960s. The masonry buildings provided extra protection against fire. Many of the earlier frame vernacular houses were prone to accidental chimney and stove fires. There is a pattern of building three-bay houses in the 1940s and several of the concrete block houses dating to the 40s, 50s and 60s remain unpainted. The concrete block appears to have been appreciated in its unpainted texture.

### **Religious Buildings**

There are two key religious institutions in the proposed District. The Slash Church, a heavy frame 1720s Colonial Era building, began as a Protestant Church of England house of worship and by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century became the Disciples of Christ denomination. The Brown Grove Baptist Church likely has its roots in a brush arbor spaces in the eastern end of the community. The first Brown Grove Church dated to c. 1920 (or possibly earlier) and it burned in 1941. The current Brown Grove Church is a one story Gothic Revival

style building with several modest additions at the back side of the building. The current church was built in 1945.

### **Commerce/Stores**

The site of Jenkin's Store is located in the woods on the abandoned Garnett Road. Garnett Road aligns with Egypt Road and older residents remember this property as an active commercial establishment in the first half of the 20th century. The Jenkin's family were white and some of their family are buried at Slash Church. In the later history of the store, they served the black community of Brown Grove. While this resource has not been surveyed, local residents report some ruins visible at the site and buildings are visible in recent aerals. The Jenkins family name appears on Civil War era maps to the west of the Jenkin's Store site. The first mapped appearance of two buildings labeled Jenkin's Store appears in 1938. The store site/ruins may date to the nineteenth century. The ruins of Jenkin's Store are clearly visible in Google Maps aerial mode, imagery dated 2019.

Many of the residents of Brown Grove ran businesses on their properties. The Jackson Store at Lewistown and Ashcake roads is a small one-story, front gable, two-bay building, constructed in concrete block, and is one of the examples of small scale commerce in the community. Now showing a sign for "Shoe Shine," the store was built in the 1950s. It is one of several concrete block buildings in the District that has remained unpainted.



**Jenkins Store Buildings on Garnett Road Trace, Sliding Hill Road at right. Google Maps-Enhanced for visibility.**

### **Cemeteries**

The Brown Grove Community features cemeteries spread over the District area. There are family cemeteries representing the Brown, Lewis, Morris, Coleman, Williams, Jones, Johnson, Price, Harris and Garnett



families. The known burial areas often include 15-30 marked burials and likely more unmarked at each site. Typically, the marked cemeteries chronicle three generations of each family; earlier generations may not have marked sites. The cemetery at the Brown Grove Baptist Church features the Church/Community founders, the Brown family. The Brown family house sat to the west of the Church in the current Romans Road Park. The Slash Church features a cemetery as well and the African American Price family cemetery is across the road from the Church. Ten known cemeteries are included within the boundaries. Several are still active. Funerary art ranges from carved concrete headstones to more elaborate marble stones. Brown Grove residents depended on the two historic African American Dabney family funeral homes in Berkelytown (in Ashland, now an eligible historic district) to handle funeral arrangements. The Dabney name plate is still visible on many of the concrete grave caps. Family tradition at Memorial Day includes repainting the concrete caps as needed and placing flowers.

While there are known cemeteries in the community there may be other unmarked areas with burials and there are several more that are not noted above since they were not accessed during the general windshield survey of the area.

The development over the years has impacted family burial sites. In one case, in the Lewistown Road section of the District, construction of the North Lake business park necessitated the removal of a group of remains away from the community. A marble plaque was given to the Brown Grove Church as a memorial. The remains were moved to the Roselawn Memory Garden Cemetery, a few miles to the south on Mountain Road in Henrico County.



**Memorial stone for Lewistown Road cemetery removal at the North Lake development.**





**Marie and Walter Williams, Lewistown/Brown Grove residents whose remains were moved to Henrico County.**

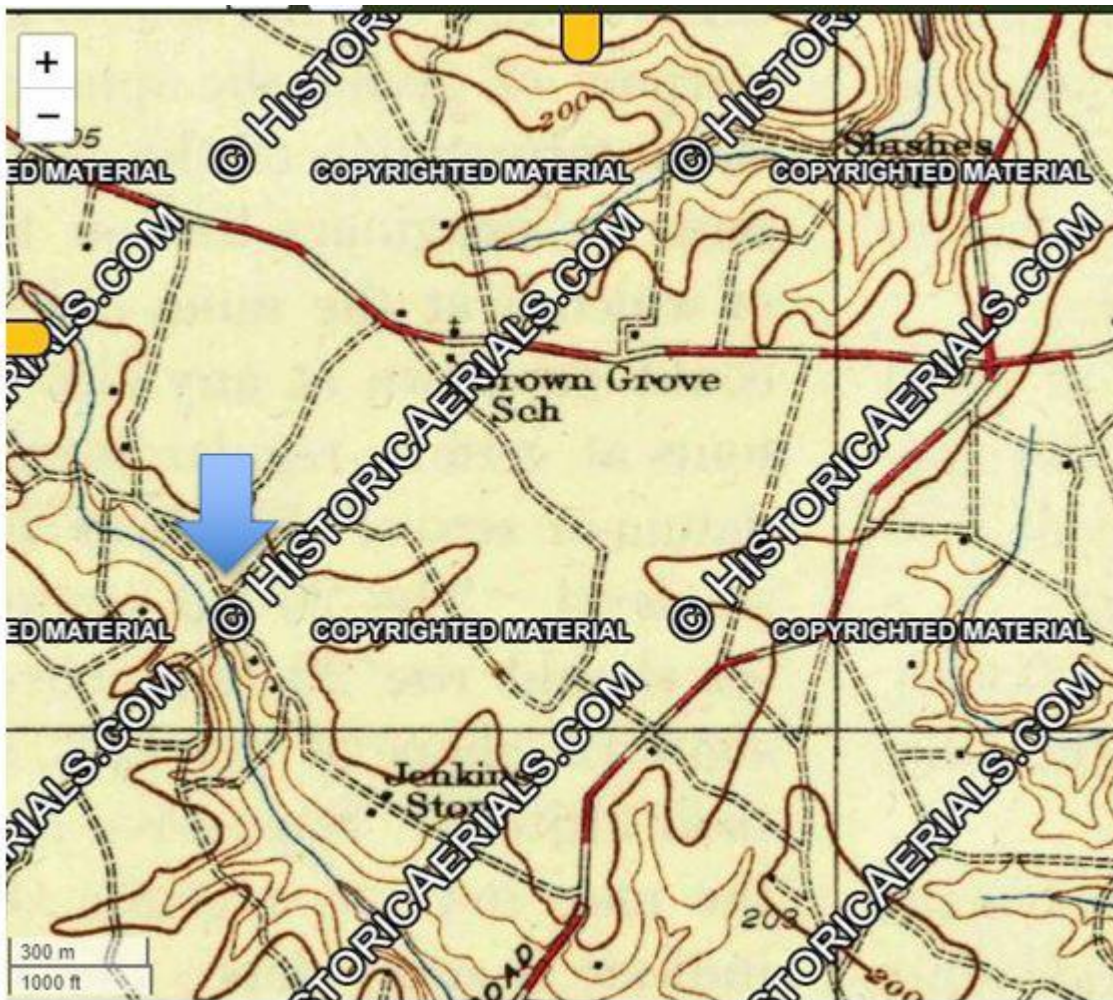
### **Archaeological Sites-School and Dwellings**

The documented sites in the District include several recorded and evaluated sites. The 1927 Brown Grove School (VDHR# 44HN0452) features masonry piers still standing. The school closed in the 1953 and was later destroyed by fire. Recent archaeology work confirms a late 18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling site on the “Merry Oaks Tavern” tract (VDHR# 44HN0326), believed to be the Robert Smith House. Also noted in recent work is a Garnett family property across the road from the 1910s Garnett House and Cemetery. This associated site (VDHR# 44HN0449) is described as a diffuse scatter of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic and architectural materials. Topographic maps from 1975 to 1994 show a building marked at the end of a driveway on this property. The site, not individually eligible, does relate to the context of the Garnett family and contributes to the district. Informal survey with local residents located the Coleman



House site, near the family cemetery on Egypt Road. The site features visible foundations and the remnants of a brick chimney flue. Based on the architectural fabric, the house appears to have been built in the first quarter of the twentieth century. There are other sites that may yield more information. Based on local accounts, and map projection, there are other house sites that could be tested. Many of these dwellings included farm complexes and the farmyard areas may yield important information about life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the District. There is building that appears on topographic maps on the northwest corner of the intersection of Ashcake and Sliding Hill. This area has had virtually no disturbance in the last one hundred years. The Jenkins Store property is a ruins and partly a site, though it has not been confirmed by direct survey, and is visible on 2021 Google Map aerial imagery. Local residents also claim that the Polly Perrin House ruins, dating to the first half of the nineteenth century, are in a wooded area to the east of Sliding Hill Road. This site was not confirmed so it is not in the proposed boundaries at this time. Polly Perrin may have played a role in the Underground Railroad. Further research is needed to confirm Polly Perrin's activities.

The Brown Grove School site and the Dwelling site on the Merry Oaks Tavern parcel have been recommended individually eligible for the state and national registers.



The 1938 USGS Quadrangle Map shows “Brown Grove School” south of the Brown Grove Baptist Church. Jenkins Store is marked as are the network of paths and roads in the community. The blue arrow points to Caroline Dobson Morris’ House and it sat on a shortcut road over to the Church and School. From Historic Aerials website.





**Concrete and brick piers of the 1927 Brown Grove School located south of the Brown Grove Baptist Church.**

### **Historic Roads**

Ashcake, Mount Hermon, Brook Spring and Sliding Hill roads all date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The African American families built up their community on Egypt, Johnson-Town and Lewistown roads. It is likely that these roads were formed from early road networks or paths to fields. The trace of Garnett Road ends in the woods at the site/ruins of Jenkins Store. Garnett Road (trace) aligns with Egypt Road. At one time this was a through road from Ashcake to Brook Spring Road and residents recall using boards used to cross creek and swampy sections. Topographic maps of the 1930s show an elaborate network of logging and farm roads through wooded areas in all parts of the District. These networks provided shortcuts between farms, access to fields, and access to logging areas. One notable path that appears on the 1938 topo is a path from Caroline Dobson Morris' house on Egypt Road to the Alease and Norman, Coleman, Sr. property on Ashcake Road. The path provided easy access from the southern end of Egypt Road to Brown Grove Church.

**Discuss the district's general setting and/or streetscapes, including current property uses (and historic uses if different), such as industrial, residential, commercial, religious, etc. For rural historic districts, please include a description of land uses.**

### **Overview/Landscape**

The Brown Grove Community Rural Historic District is comprised of a suburban and rural area of Hanover County, southeast of the Town of Ashland. It features historic architecture, sites, and structures dating from the 1730s to the early 1970s. The larger number of buildings are dwellings associated with the over 200 year old settlement of African Americans, free and enslaved residents, whose descendants still live on and own much of the property in the proposed Rural Historic District.

The Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic District is organized along several historic roads. Ashcake Road is the core road off of which extends other historic roads. Ashcake Road dates to the eighteenth century and provided access to river accessed markets to the east (the Chickahominy and James River accessing eastern Virginia ports) and early Hanover villages; Hanover Town and Hanover Court House. The Town of Ashland, also accessed by Ashcake Road, to the northwest of Brown Grove, did not develop until the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but became an important influence on economy of the area, especially after the Civil War.

The Brown Grove Baptist Church, one of the core organizing institutions of the community, drew together an African American congregation that stretched as far as current day Route 1/Telegraph Road to the west, and included families who lived on Ashcake, Sliding Hill and local roads that reached deep into wooded areas along Egypt, Johnson-Town, and Lewistown Roads. The church, recently recommended individually eligible for the state and national registers, draws on a congregation that now is even further dispersed as demographics have changed over the last century.

Three roads that extend from the southwest side of Ashcake Road represent the settlement of key African American founders and their families. Lewistown, Johnson-Town and Egypt (originally Morris) Roads area associated with the Lewis, Johnson and Morris families. Egypt Road has been referred to variously over time as "Little Egypt Road," "Morris Road," and "Morristown Road." Caroline Dobson Morris, known as the "Mother of Brown Grove" (Morris worked as a midwife in the community) lived near the end of Egypt Road.

The landscape of Ashcake Road, the spine of the Rural Historic District, is generally flat. At the northwestern end, the area of Heath's Store (Heath Pond Drive) the road corridor is generally rural and the boundary excludes modern subdivisions. As you head to the southeast, the only interruptions of the rural character are Ashglade Drive, a recent one-street subdivision, and the Concrete Pipe and Precast complex. Those are excluded from the boundary. The County landfill is buffered by woods, but excluded from the District. The residential settlement fronting Ashcake Road is mostly small and medium sized yards that back up to wooded areas. The Brown Grove Baptist Church owns a large open area on its western side that is maintained as the Romans Road Park, a field with a trail that features panels with inspirational scripture from the Bible. Further to the east, Candlewick/Ford Farm features active farm fields that extend along the north side of Ashcake Road and face dense wooded area on the south for about four tenths of mile. The intersection of Ashcake, Mount Hermon, Peaks, and Sliding Hill roads is wooded. The area of the district that extends north on Mount Hermon Road to include Slash Church and the African American Price Cemetery, is wooded and drops down into a ravine (the ravines in this area are referred to as the Slashes, historically). The district extends to the south along Sliding Hill Road and includes Brook Spring Road. All of the modern subdivisions are excluded on the east side of Sliding Hill Road and the short Brook Spring Road is included because of the historic houses that dot this stretch. Brook Spring was the original 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century path of the road; Sliding Hill Road was recently cut through to the west of Brook Spring Road.



Lewistown Road is included in two sections. A small area close to Ashcake includes historic houses and the Lewis and Coleman family cemeteries; and a discontinuous section, closer to US Route , that includes a group of buildings that forms the residential cluster historically identified as Lewistown. Lewistown was a contiguous rural settlement that at one time spanned the area from Route 1 to Ashcake Road, but development of Interstate 95 and other developments in the last forty years have altered a large section of the Lewistown Road landscape, essentially separating the community.

Johnson-Town Road is partly wooded but features open residential yards and crosses open field areas where the end of an airport runway was built. The runway construction created potential danger to the few residents who lived on this section of the road and the houses were removed. There is one historic house at the end of the road, somewhat away from the runway path. The removed houses present some potential for archaeology.

Egypt Road has some residential yards, but features long stretches of dense woods. The southeastern part of the District, the area bounded by Ashcake, Sliding Hill and Egypt roads is a large densely wooded area that includes swampland and was traditionally an area that was logged and featured older paths and roads between sections of the community. Residents believe that this area, laid out as the Oakland Subdivision in c.1912 by the African American Carter family, may have had residents and there is some potential for house sites and burials in this area (this is information from oral history).

The settlement pattern throughout the District is largely comprised of small frame or masonry houses that are set back from the roads. The historic houses date from the 1930s to the 1970s. There are several examples of trailers that date to the 1960s-1970s. New buildings have been added overtime and they are built at the similar scale or slightly larger than the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century houses.

### **Impact of Development**

While the one thousand acres inside the proposed district boundaries features wooded areas, swampland, narrow rural roads, there have been encroachments into this rural area. The history of development is clear in the northwestern end of Ashcake Road where there are crane and concrete companies and a County landfill. Lewistown Road stretches east to west from Ashcake Road to US Route 1. The development around Hanover Airport and the Route 95 Interchange has obliterated part of the residential settlement, but a discontinuous area of Lewistown is included with more than twenty properties associated with families who have lived in the Lewistown section of Brown Grove for over a hundred years. Expansion of the Airport, and extension of the runway, forced the removal of Johnson-Town Road houses. Sliding Hill Road has been widened and developed to accommodate more commercial and dense suburban development. The area chosen for the boundaries encompasses the more rural sections of Brown Grove and capture key historic resources. While intrusions exist, the core of the district is still strongly rural in character.

#### **4. District's History and Significance**

**In the space below, briefly describe the history of the district, such as when it was established, how it developed over time, and significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.) Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.**

**If the district is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.**

In considering Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic District we cite Article 12 of the Code of Virginia, The Environmental Justice Act. We believe that Brown Grove is an environmental justice community. Over the last 50-60 years, there has been a concerted effort to overlook the value of this African American historic residential and religious community. Large commercial and industrial projects have been planned and executed affecting the community; local zoning has been designed to erode a decent standard of residential life. Brown Grove has been partly obliterated by Hanover Airport, continuing road widening; installation of a large County landfill; the installation of industrial plants in the middle of rural community; a clear pattern of encouraged encroachment continues to this day. We are applying for historic designation while this community still has good physical integrity. We celebrate this 1000 acre area, a rural historic district, where we can tell the important history of African American life over the last 200+ years in Hanover County, Virginia; the heart wrenching story of enslavement and political oppression, but also the story of self-sufficiency and positive contributions to the greater community. The place we practice our religion and maintain our families as they live and where they are buried. We seek a good standard of living, and to preserve our cultural heritage in the manner that the Virginia and the United States has promised all citizens.

We paraphrase parts of Article 12 and "definitions":

##### **Environmental Justice**

§ 2.2-235. Policy regarding environmental justice.

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote environmental justice and ensure that it is carried out throughout the Commonwealth, with a focus on environmental justice communities and fenceline communities.

"Community of color" means any geographically distinct area where the population of color, expressed as a percentage of the total population of such area, is higher than the population of color in the Commonwealth expressed as a percentage of the total population of the Commonwealth. However, if a community of color is composed primarily of one of the groups listed in the definition of "population of color," the percentage population of such group in the Commonwealth shall be used instead of the percentage population of color in the Commonwealth.

"Environment" means the natural, cultural, social, economic, and political assets or components of a community.

"Environmental justice" means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of every person, regardless of race, color, national origin, income, faith, or disability, regarding the development, implementation, or enforcement of any environmental law, regulation, or policy.

"Environmental justice community" means any low-income community or community of color.



"Fair treatment" means the equitable consideration of all people whereby no group of people bears a disproportionate share of any negative environmental consequence resulting from an industrial, governmental, or commercial operation, program, or policy.

### **Summary of Significance**

The Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Religion. It is also locally significant under National Register Criterion D for the potential to yield important historic and contextual information about the lives of residents over the last 250 years. Criterion D applies to the 1927 Brown Grove School site as it supports the area of Education. Criterion D also applies to the area of Agriculture; the potential for yielding information about sharecropper and subsistence farming (there are numerous farm sites with dwelling and farm building complex sites that relate to a sharecropper economy). The period of significance starts with the construction of Slash Church in 1729 and ends with the construction of Hanover Airport in 1971. Slash Church was likely built employing enslaved workers and families in Brown Grove can trace their roots to worshipping at Slash Church. The construction of Hanover Airport has attracted unchecked development and encouraged the erosion of residential zoning in favor of industrial and commercial development.

### **The Growth of Brown Grove Community and its Contributors/Historic Overview**

The Brown Grove community is located fifteen miles north of Richmond, Virginia, near the Town of Ashland. All of the Brown Grove Residential Community is in Hanover County.

The Brown Grove Residential Rural Historic is a step back into a rural landscape in the middle of a growing commercial and industrial area. Before Interstate 95 and Hanover Airport were built the landscape in a five mile radius of the Brown Grove Baptist Church was dotted with small and large farms, remnants of the evolved agricultural landscape that had evolved from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The area from Slash Church to US Route 1 was once populated by large farms, a primary road network, and several taverns. On the west side of the current Interstate 95 was an area that was once known as French Hay. The French Hay house of the 18<sup>th</sup> century hosted French soldiers as they moved and camped on their way to Yorktown in 1781. The 1820s French Hay house that faced the camp field was moved about a mile to the south and placed on a concrete foundation in favor of big box stores in the 1990s. Moving east on Sliding Hill Road, the still extant French Hay Tavern, c. 1810 is now for sale, likely zoned commercial and it may succumb to development. The Colonial and Revolutionary War history is present in Brown Grove where Slash Church was built in 1729. It hosted generations of the Henry family, including Patrick Henry, one of Virginia's most outspoken proponents for freedom. The Merry Oaks Tavern stood near Ashcake and Sliding Hill Roads (within the proposed District) and it was at the Tavern that Patrick Henry raised the first Virginia Militia Company during the run up to the Revolutionary War. This same parcel was later owned by an African American family, the Garnetts, by 1919 and residents remember Brown Grove African American residents living on that site in the early twentieth century. The history of Brown Grove is still vital and legible in the landscape, the people and key institutions like Brown Grove Baptist Church and Slash Church.

The southeastern end of the proposed district featured the history of Slash Church and Merry Oaks Tavern. Accounts in 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth century newspapers referred to the area as "Merry Oaks" or "Merry Oaks Church." It is not clear as to whether there was a second church near the Sliding Hill Road and Ashcake Road intersection, but USGS maps from 1894 to 1931 call this area "Merry Oaks Church" and by 1938 a more detailed topo shows "Brown Grove Church" and more physical details of the African American Community. Brown Grove community has been evolving since the 1860s, but its roots go back to early settlement in the area.

The history of Brown Grove is a Virginia story of enslavement, freedom, community and survival. The African American residents share names with families who once enslaved them. The antebellum white

Carters ran a mill north of Brown Grove and there are Carter families in Brown Grove. The Winston name is found all over Hanover County and has association with some of the prominent early plantations, including associations with the Henry family. We show a photograph (see Appendices) of Bickerton Winston holding two white children who were likely from one of the local farmsteads. Bickerton Winston shares his name with Dr. Bickerton Winston of the white Winston family. Caroline Dobson Morris (The Mother of Brown Grove) was enslaved by Isaac Perrin, a significant landowner in the current district boundary and his house likely stood somewhere just south of Slash Church (needs further verification, but there are at least two potential Perrin family house sites in this area). All of these families share in the collective history of Hanover County. The African American descendants have stayed close to the land of their heritage in Brown Grove for over 200 years.

The Slash Church and Robert Smith House archaeological site, and the network of Colonial Era roads, convey the 18<sup>th</sup> century history. The Ford Farm (also known as Candlewick, VDHR #042-0253) in the southeastern area of the proposed District dates to the 1840s. Ford family members are buried in the Slash Church cemetery and their ancestor Elder Rueben Ford was a celebrated Baptist pastor in the religious freedom movement in Central Virginia. Elder Rueben Ford is recorded as one of the notable preachers at Slash Church. Ancestors in Brown Grove may have been enslaved on the Ford Farm, but the current elders of Brown Grove remember that families worked there and shared in building community during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Ford Farm is still a working agricultural resource and is the largest farm in the proposed District. While many residents maintained and still farm in the District, they also worked at the large Ford and Beasley farms.

Brown Grove Baptist Church was established in 1870 by six visionary men who built a brush arbor. In 1893, Edmund (or Edwin) and Martha Brown, residents of Brown Grove community, purchased 1.95 acres of land from Orson and Frances Staley. The land was donated to the Brown Grove Baptist Church congregation by the Brown family with the stipulation that the only use be a church. The deed was accomplished through the descendant of their daughter, Elizabeth (Brown). Brown Grove Baptist Church has a shared religious heritage with Slash Church so both churches are integral to understanding the full story of the Brown Grove Community.

In the late nineteenth century, residents worked as sharecroppers and were very active in the church. As years passed, many earned enough to purchase their own land and build homes. Families were raised to respect God, family and education. These lessons were as valuable as those leading to a diploma.

The founders of the community were the Brown, Jackson, Jones, Morris, Carter, Walker, Lewis, Garnett and King families (and others). The church is made up of many descendants of Caroline Dobson Morris and husband Jefferson Morris. Affectionately, called Grandma Caroline and Aunt Caroline, she presented herself as a strong and stern woman with loving kinships. Some spoke of her as the mother of Brown Grove and many believe and no one doubted the name Morris is the tie that binds most of the church membership and the community. Ancestor, Oliver Dobson, a mulatto, born in 1827 in Hanover County, and wife Sophia Jones, were slaves of the Dobson family and freed in 1865. According to census report daughter Caroline Dobson was 10 years old. Caroline Morris was enslaved by Isaac Perrin, one of the antebellum period owners of land in the southern part of the proposed Rural Historic District.

Caroline married Jefferson Morris on Christmas Day, 1872. They were blessed with 13 children. Their home place was located on a narrow dirt road called Morris/Morristown Rd in the Brown Grove community, currently Egypt Road today. Caroline became a midwife and earned the respectful title of "Mother of Brown Grove community." A portrait of her is located in our church today and a stained glass window marks her precious memories. She leaves a legacy of descendants to honor and protect her heritage.



The community survived the turn of the century, the Reconstruction Era, and the Great Depression. As Ashland grew, the railroad offered work and soon other businesses grew because of rail access. Jefferson Morris is listed in the census reports late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a railroad worker. The first time Brown Grove is recorded in some detail is on the 1938 USGS Map. The 1927 Brown Grove School is prominently labeled, just to the south of Brown Grove Baptist Church.

During the 1930s, families helped each other. They bartered or pooled their resources to endure hardships. Children witnessed their fathers cutting cardboard and placing them in their shoes to give some protection from the elements they encountered.

In the 1930's and 40's many people worked as domestics or at the laundries. The work was hard and the hours were long but with the help of family members, the work was done. Men continued to work farms and some worked as carpenters, masonry and bricklayers. Some enlisted in the segregated armed forces to fight against Hitler's forces in Europe and Tojo's military in the South Pacific. After the war, many returned to Brown Grove community to face a segregated United States. Military enlistment was high in the Brown Grove community and there are many veterans from WWI, WWII, Korean and Vietnam Wars as well as recent conflicts. Almost all of the known cemeteries in the proposed Rural Historic District have the burials of veterans; some are marked with the official federal white marble headstones.

The community still continued to prosper despite the burning down of a school and a church. The children continued their education now at the Hanover Training School in Ashland.

Social life in the 30's 40's and 50's was somewhat limited. People would travel from house to house to play and listen to the Victrola (record player). Walter Jackson and Harrison Johnson would play checkers until the early morning hours. Large crowds would gather at many homes to listen to Joe Louis's fights on the radio.

Baseball games were popular and Brown Grove had a team. Mr. Armstrong and Lester Jackson organized the team. Games began in the neighborhood and then moved to the highway location (off Route 1). Players included Theodore Carter as pitcher. Others were Booker T Carter, Albert Johnson, Frank Johnson, Winfred Davis, Lloyd Ginny Winston, Alphine Lewis, Henry Carter and others who may have been omitted.

The 50's brought a few changes to the community. The roads were paved, residents began to seek employment. Women went to work. Many worked at the Ashland Shirt Factory.

Jackson's Grocery was built and owned by Willie Jackson Sr., on Ashcake Road. Neighbors would signal Mr. Jackson, who lived next to the store, "Go to The Store" when someone wanted to make a purchase. He would faithfully walk to the store and accommodate his customers. The other mentionable stores were the Jenkins Store (now a site), on Garnett/Egypt Road and the Mary Lewis Store on Ashcake Road. Her store may have been built in the late 40's or early 50's. Mary lived in a little log cabin next to her store.

During the 60's, television brought us world events, to the homes in Brown Grove. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movements were presented in our living rooms. Frances (Jackson) Jones was in downtown Richmond when the sit-ins began at the Woolworth's Department Store.

Rev. Benjamin Jackson Sr., Elizabeth Robinson and other men and women from the community attended and witnessed Dr. King's "March on Washington" and heard his "I Have a Dream" speech first hand.

Desegregation of the schools began in the 1960's, first on a voluntary basis. Some of Brown Grove children attended the previously all white Henry Clay and Elmont Elementary and Patrick Henry High Schools.

Among them were Marvin Jackson, Herbert Carter, Theodore (Ted) Carter Jr., Ronald Harris, Sandra (Mason) Watkins, Benjamin (Chuck) Jackson Jr., Kathy Carter, James Jackson, Jr., Clinton Jackson and others who may have been omitted. Some met at Jackson's Grocery and a courageous bus driver drove them to school. They experienced racial threats on daily basis. With all the negative things placed before them, they were brave enough to deal with the challenges. Schools later were fully integrated in Hanover County Public School System and other surrounding counties.

As television informed us of the positive and humorous events of the 1960's, we also saw and learned of the tragedies and assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert (Bobby) F. Kennedy.

The 1960's, 70's and 80's brought economic changes to the Brown Grove Community. Interstate 95 was built and a new traffic route was developed along with Speed and Brisco Truck Stop and the Shell Gas Station off Lewistown Road, some of the first losses of the rural character of the community.

Employment opportunities improved for the young and the not so young, however; that led to other businesses (Hanover Industrial Air Park and Virginia Precast) and the re-zoning of parts of the Brown Grove Community on Ashcake Road.

The 21st century continued to bring more changes and opportunities, however bitter sweet. An area off Lewistown Road (part of the community) was re-zoned and described by county officials as a destination location. Due to community opposition and concern, meetings were held at Brown Grove Baptist Church where county government officials presented information regarding future plans for the area to include an outlet mall.

Despite our efforts, the county plans for an outlet mall continued but the mall was never built. The community witnessed several developments to include Bass Pro Sporting Shop, hotels, fast food stores and more. This generated more traffic and the potential for crime to our neighborhood.

Today, the overburdened and threatened Brown Grove community is faced with many challenges of industrialization, encroachments, landfills, and new traffic patterns created from Lewistown Road into the Hanover Industrial Park. There is a strong bias against the rural and residential Brown Grove community, for instance; Lewistown residents encounter a concrete medium strip in front of their property and are forced to use a one way property entrance.

The Interstate 95 over-path (bridge) on Lewistown Road was re-constructed for safety and to accommodate additional thruway traffic. Brown Grove is used as a cut through and cars can be clocked at 60 miles per hour on the narrow segments of the rural Ashcake Road. Traffic (and development) pressures come from developments located in North Lake and surrounding businesses. The new traffic lights and traffic patterns are planned for commercial and industrial development and clearly do not enhance residential development. These conditions reduce the quality of living standards to the point where residents are forced off their land.

In the coming years, our historic Brown Grove community makeup and designs may look different and there may be impacts to Ashcake Road, Egypt Road, Johnson-town, Lewistown and even Sliding Hill Road.

We can only imagine the hardships and sacrifices made by one's ancestors. They would want us to keep family heritage, landmarks, untouchable and unforgettable. Our community has tremendous pride as keepers of this beautiful wooded area with many of the historic touchstones around us.

We pause to reflect on 151 years of a church and a community working together, they allowed many to prosper, preserve and protect their families and their labor.

Lord, we thank you for your many blessings and may your grace and mercy continue to surround our community with safety and your love. Amen

### **Business Owners & Resident Contributors & Veterans of the Brown Grove Community**

In many cases, businesses have been run from resident's properties.

Caroline Dobson Morris, a freedwoman upon emancipation was a midwife, and the mother of Brown Grove Community.

Mr. John Edwards nicknamed: RED John had a logging business. Sons: Ronald & Donald Edwards owns a mechanic shop and towing business.

Brothers, Booker T, Theodore, Earl Carter and nephew Jethro Carter owned dump trucks, hauling gravel and did landscaping work.

Bricklayers and Masonry: Rev. Benjamin Jackson Sr., Lafayette Lewis Sr., Irving Jones Sr., Marshall, Wilson, and Isaac Lewis, Hiawatha Walker Sr., Thaddeus Jones Sr., Robert Lewis Sr., Bernard Lewis, James (Buck) Johnson, John Johnson, Booker Preston, Callis Jones Sr., William (Maniboy) King, Lloyd (Ginny) King.

They all helped build many of the historic brick and concrete houses and our modern day brick church. Their labor was truly not in vain. Others may have been omitted.

Raymond Lewis was a grave -digger, he did foundation work and dug wells. Currently, Leon Harris now owns the business.

Willie Jackson Sr. owned Jackson's grocery store. Mary Lewis owned a store.

Johnny Harris owned the first trash truck business in Brown Grove. Later, years, McKinley Harris owned the business.

McKinley Harris is in the Hall of Fame at Hanover County Black Heritage Society.

Victoria Carter, Dora Carter, Blanche, Shirley, Mary, Betty Jones, Helen King, Elizabeth (Liz) Harris were all our community hairdressers. Others may have been omitted. Many worked in their homes.

Kimberlyn (Harris) Washington and sister, Renada (Harris) Mickens are also hair professionals and currently own their Silk Hair Studio.

Bonnica Cotman became an accountant for Hanover County, The Virginia Lottery, and Harris Disposal Service.

Stacy Peterson currently owns her hair shop.

Wallace Jackson was truly the community Barber.

Leroy Peterson was an electrician and the TV repair man.



Lanny Jones owned a welding shop, then Atlantic Enterprise, later became a general contractor. Ronnie Jones, his son now owns the business.

Eulis or Ulysses Toolie Davis owned the Royal Star Inn.

Michael Smith owned company (BRS Modular) installed office equipment, cubicles, shelving & furniture.

Herman Harris was the community Mechanic.

Johnny Jones owned Mary's Inn and a dry cleaning business.

Ginny Lewis, Jane Lewis, & Bell Davis were mid-wives.

Trent and Peter Peterson were General builder contractors. Trent's son, Antron, now owns the business.

Minor Harris and Ellis Harris, Sr. were avid painters and plaster experts in the community.

Benjamin (Chuck) Jackson Jr., owns a business that services general home repairs, etc.

Melinda (Tyler) Spurlock became a real estate broker.

Joyce (Carter) Ball became a family court judge.

Delores (Peterson) Tarrer became a teacher and a pharmacist.

Atanya Lewis became first black woman engineer at the University of Virginia.  
She was first black homecoming queen at Patrick Henry High School. The first black woman engineer at North Anna Power Plant at VA Electric and Power Company (Vepco) now called Dominion Energy.

Arthur Hall Jr. owned a travel bus company.

Martha (Jones King) Anderson became a registered nurse.

Brenda (Coleman) Brown became a registered nurse.

David Carter became a police officer.

Willnette Jackson became a school teacher.

Sandra (Mason) Watkins became a school teacher.

Britney (Lambert) Dabney became a school teacher.

Shana (Jones) Banks became a school teacher.

Toneshia (Watkins) Harris became a news reporter, currently works as public relations officer for Guam's Federation of Teachers.

Frank (Pap) Winston was a blacksmith who worked with iron making and repairing horseshoes.  
Eugene Coleman owned a hauling dump truck.

Shanika Hope-Digital Content Strategist and Research Lead at Amazon, Assistant Superintendent DC Public Schools.

Betty (Jones King) Lozano became a certified and private duty nurse.

Earl Hall Sr. became a licensed preacher.

Cynthia Hall became a licensed preacher.

Kate (Coleman) Mason became a licensed preacher.

Ronald Harris became a professional firefighter.

Randy King became a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier.

Charles Tyler became the church bus/van driver and a professional limousine driver for major company Reynolds Metal now known as Alcoa.

Shelia (Tolson) Clarke became a professional caterer.

Thaddeus Jones Jr. became a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier.

Ashley Morris owns a daycare.

Robyn Hall owns a daycare.

Pamela (Baylor) Sophall owned a secretarial business.

Linda Coleman became a professional hairdresser.

Kenneth (Tyler) Spurlock Jr. became a school teacher.

Keishanna (Morris) James became a radio announcer.

Wallace Mason owns a shoe shine shop once known as Jackson Grocery and may have been first GRTC-Richmond City bus driver from the community.

Marcella Winston Singh became a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier.

Kristi Jackson paints portraits. Her talent includes the drawing/painting of historic 2-room Brown Grove School.

**Known Veterans** (Others may have been omitted)

**Air Force (9)**

Earl Hall (Air Force)

Edward Washington (Air Force)

George Carter (Air Force)

Randy King (Air Force)

Carol Bush (Air Force)

Anthony Robinson (Air Force)  
Philip James Jr. (Air Force)  
Alphonso Price (Air Force)  
Robert Price (Air Force)

**Army (65)**

McKinley Harris (Army)  
Charles Tyler (Army)  
Aubrey Lewis (Army)  
Sherwood Mason (Army)  
Charles Tarrer (Army)  
Booker T Carter (Army)  
Melvin Hall (Army)  
Calvin Carter (Army)  
Franklin Carter (Army)  
Ronald Carter (Army)  
Sandy Carter (Army)  
Herman Carter Jr. (Army)  
Herman Carter Sr., (Army) and (Navy)  
Irving Jones Sr. (Army)  
Albert Johnson (Army)  
Wayne Johnson (Army)  
Roger Coleman Jr. (Army)  
Wilbur (Peter) Peterson (Army)  
Calvin Peterson (Army)  
Barry Peterson (Army)  
Wayne Jackson (Army)  
Alonzo Thompson (Army)  
Darryl Thompson (Army)  
James King Sr. (Army)  
Jerome King (Army)  
George King Jr. (Army)  
Bruce Carter (Army)  
Benjamin Baylor Sr. (Army)  
Ally Baylor (Army)  
Thomas (Buck) Smith (Army)  
Alfred King (Army)  
Wilbur Watkins Sr. (Army)  
Wilbur Watkins Jr. (Army)  
Wilbur Watkins III (Army)  
Vincent Watkins (Army)  
James Taylor (Army)  
Clyde Lewis (Army)  
Alvin Jackson (Army)  
Ronnie Byrd (Army)  
Earl C Smith Jr. (Army)  
Meredith Winston (Army)  
Alphine Jones (Army)  
Louis Coleman (Army)  
George Coleman (Army)



Ernest Hayes Sr. WWII (Army)  
Earl C Smith Sr. Korean War (Army)  
Haywood Harris Vietnam War (Army)  
Thomas Byrd Vietnam War (Army)  
Christopher (Clayborne) Jones Vietnam War (Army)  
Bernard Peterson Vietnam War (Army)  
James Drake Jr. Vietnam War (Army)  
Emmanuel Robinson Jr. Vietnam War (Army)  
Louise Clinton (Army)  
Beverly (Walker) George (Army)  
Linwood Robinson (Army)  
Maurice Robinson (Army)  
Craig Parsons (Army)  
Anthony Morris (Army)  
Charles Morris (Army)  
Troy Brown (Army)  
Andrew Rashid (Army)  
John Morris (Army)  
Tony Parker (Army)  
George Mobley (Army)  
Rev. Dr. Darius E. Beechaum (Army)

**Marines (4)**

Roy Edwards (Marines)  
Thaddeus Jones Jr. (Marines)  
Willie (Player) Jackson Jr. Vietnam War (Marines)  
Walter Jackson Jr. (Marines)

**Navy (19)**

Theodore Carter Sr (Navy)  
Edward Carter (Navy)  
Edward Lewis (Navy)  
William (Will) Jones (Navy)  
David Carter (Navy)  
Charles Dabney (Navy)  
Sandra Parker (Navy)  
Lenell Mobley (Navy)  
Percy Baylor (Navy)  
Wilbur Walker (Navy)  
Shirrell Harris (Navy)  
Alton Robinson (Navy)  
Charles Robinson (Navy)  
Billy Carter (Navy)  
Timothy Watkins (Navy)  
Benjamin (Benny) Watkins (Navy)  
Michael J Smith (Navy)  
Billy Jones (Navy)  
Edward Watkins Sr. (Navy)

It took a community of people, to have a vision of a better tomorrow. We believe their faith was strong with many obstacles. We know the love of helping each other and sharing their knowledge, time, talent and treasure made Brown Grove a wonderful place to live. We thank God for all the families and their contributions. There's No Limit When God is in it

### **References/Sources**

Diane Smith Drake, Brown Grove Baptist Church Usher and Community Historian, has conducted numerous interviews with residents and local historians over the past two years. The residents have shared their memories and they have shared historic photos and other personal collections. Drake also worked with DHR staff to field verify historic resources on properties where access was allowed. Drake also used available primary resources at the Hanover County Library and the U.S. Census.

Aerial Views provided on website Historic Aerials: 1966, 1968, 1994, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016.

Google Maps-Google Earth current imagery, access April/May 2021

USGS Topographic Maps: 1894, 1895, 1901, 1911, 1920, 1931, 1938, 1946, 1951, 1965, 1969, 1975, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1994, 2013, 2016

1990 Survey of Historic Resources Hanover County, Virginia. Prepared for Hanover County Planning Department by Land and Community Associates. Manuscript on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Keller, Genevieve P., Ashley M. Neville, Heather E. Magnniss, Katharine T. Lacy, J. Timothy Keller, and Gregory L. Brittingham

Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of the  $\pm 87.9$ -Hectare ( $\pm 217.4$ -Acre) Wegmans Distribution Center Project Area, Hanover County, Virginia. VDHR File Number 2019-0791. Prepared for: Timmons Group. Prepared by: Dutton+ Associates, LLC. Principal Investigator: Hope Smith, Ph.D. December 2019/Revised June 2020

The History of Slash Church, St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County. The Oldest Frame Colonial Church in Continuous Use in Virginia. Revised: Sept. 29, 2010 Dianne A. Jones, Historian.  
<https://www.slashcc.org/the-history-of-slash-church.html>

The Hanover County Black Heritage Society, Inc. One and Two Room Schools: African American Education in Hanover County, 1870-1960. Ashland: 2001.

A History of Education in Hanover County, Virginia 1778-2008.  
Rebecca Bray and Dr. Lloyd Jones. January 1, 2010.

"Roses in December: Black life in Hanover County, Virginia during the era of disfranchisement."  
Dissertation, Jody Lynn Allen. 2007.

### **5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: ☒X\_\_\_\_\_ Public\Local \_\_\_\_\_ Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Applicant/Sponsor** (Individual and/or organization sponsoring preparation of the PIF, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

Name/title: Diane Smith Drake –Usher

Organization: Member of Brown Grove Baptist Church

Street & number: 4421 Breezy Bay Circle #107

City or town: Henrico State: VA Zip code: 23233-7126

E-mail: dianes35@comcast.net Telephone: 804-921-2055

Applicant's Signature: *Diane Smith Drake*

Date: 4/17/2021

*• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •*

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Diane Smith Drake, Community Historian

Daytime Telephone: 804-921-2055

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than applicant/sponsor listed above)

Name/title: Diane Smith Drake-Brown Grove Baptist Church Usher

Organization: Member of Brown Grove Baptist Church

Street & number: 4421 Breezy Bay Circle #107

City or town: Henrico State: VA Zip code: 23233-7126

E-mail: dianes35@comcast.net Telephone: 804-921-2055

**7. Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager.

Name/title: \_\_\_\_\_

Locality: \_\_\_\_\_

Street & number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendices

### **Historic Photos of Residents and the Brown Grove Community Landscape**



**Caroline Dobson Morris. “The Mother of Brown Grove.” (1846-1944)**



**Mrs. Frances Jackson and husband Willie Jackson Sr., Owner of Jackson Store, Ashcake Road, c. 1940s.**



**Hiawatha Walker Sr. standing by car, c. late 1970s. His c. 1910s house stood in Lewistown until the 1980s. He was born January 5, 1899. A sharecropper and a brick mason who helped with the building of the historic 1945 Brown Grove Baptist Church.**





**Old House on Johnson Town Road: Home place of Lena Morris Johnson, daughter of Caroline Dobson Morris and Jefferson Morris. Lena Johnson was buried in the Johnson cemetery that is located across the road from the house. Hiawatha Walker, Jr is standing in the yard  
Hiawatha was the great grandson of Caroline and Jefferson Morris.**



**Unknown residents/Brown Grove Farmstead and open landscape, c. 1940s-50s**



**Bickerton Winston owned a farm in Peaks, but was part of the Brown Grove Community.**



**Wallace and Melvina Jackson in Brown Grove yard, farming equipment in the distance, c. 1940s.**





#### **Homecoming Sunday 1940s**

**Brown Grove Baptist Church celebrates homecoming/ Big Meeting and the beginning of Revival week the third Sunday in August each year.**

The tables would be setup on the west side of the church the day before. Those arriving for Sunday School service waited with great anticipation of a delicious dinner from many households in the community. Prior to the end of the morning service, family members, especially the grandmothers would politely leave service to prepare for the Big Meeting dinner.

Guest preachers would be served first. It was quite an honor to have the pastor and visiting preachers request an item from your family basket. Everyone ate outside, on cars, inside cars, on the steps or wherever space was found. No one dared to enter the sanctuary to eat unless perhaps on a rainy day. After the dinner came the beginning of our evening church service. Many testified, many said a prayer or read the scripture. Some led a song, clapped their hands, stumped their feet and shouted Hallelujah and praised God in their own way. Then came the preached word followed by an invitation to those who confessed Christ and wanted to be saved. Many confessed and later were baptized. It was a grand time of kindred souls, fellowship and blessings!



### The Garnett Farm, Sliding Hill Road

An album of photos show the typical farm in Brown Grove in a series of photos from the 1930s to 1950s. The house is still extant and the Garnett family cemetery is in the woods behind the house. Note the poultry sheds, shop buildings and various outbuildings. One work shop still survives along with a later garage. The family had horses and raised chickens, ducks, geese and pigs. The potential for archaeology in this busy farmyard is high and would provide an understanding of how the sharecropper's farm operated. The house dates to c. 1910-1915 and was likely built by Frank Garnett, Lucy Garnett Winston's father.



Garnett House, likely built by Frank Garnett or his father. Photo taken May, 2021



Garnett House in c. 1940. Lucy Garnett Winston with her niece Orelia Scott.





**Garnett House in May, 2021**



**Lucy Garnett Winston in her backyard in c. 1940.**



**Frank Garnett, farmer and significant Brown Grove landowner (1880-1932).**



**Lucy Alice Garnett (1881-1967) was a Mattaponi Indian. She married Frank Garnett. When Frank Garnett passed away in 1932, she married John Price. The Garnett Farm was given to their daughter and son-in-law, Lucy Alice Garnett Winston and Nathaniel Winston.**



• JUN • 56



**Meredith Winston at poultry sheds in June, 1956.**



**Lucy Garnett Winston in front of a shop building (goose in background). C. 1940s-50s.**





Meredith Winston working in the Garnett Farm field on Sliding Hill Road. The Garnetts owned land in the Sliding Hill Road area. The family owned the Merry Oaks Tavern parcel after 1919.



Farm and hunting dogs in front of farm buildings. C. 1940s.



Lucy Garnett, Sr. standing with daughter Roberta. The photo shows the house with front porch in the 1940s.





**Lucy Garnett Winston at Brown Grove Baptist Church in the 1960s or 70s.**